WIGSTON URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT

of the

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

for the year 1942

Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,

I have pleasure in presenting my fourth annual report on the health of your district.

In accordance with instructions received from the Ministry of Health, the report is again produced in a very abrieviated form.

The general health of the population has been good. The birth rate is higher than at any time during the preceeding 5 years and the death rate lower than at any time during the last six years. Attention must however, be drawn to one disquieting feature; the abnormally high infant mortality rate. The increase in the number of infant deaths cannot be attributed to any one individual cause and demonstrates how important it is that every care must be taken in dealing with the health and welfare of newly born infants.

VITAL STATISTICS

Birth rate per thousand estimated resident population 1942 ...			19.6
Birth rate for England and Wales 1942			15.8
Death rate (crude) per thousand estimated population			10.2
Death rate (corrected)			not available
Death rate for England and Wales			11.6
Deaths from puerperal causes:			
Puerperal sepsis, no. of deaths			nil
Other puerperal causes, no. of deaths			3
Puerperal mortality rate for England and Wales per thousand total live and still births			2.01
Deaths of infants under one year of age:	Male	Female	Total
Legitimate	10	8	18
Illegitimate	1	1	2
Infant mortality rate per thousand live births			77
Infant mortality rate for England and Wales			49
Deaths from certain diseases:			
Diphtheria			1
Whooping Cough			1
Diarrhoea (under 2 years)			1
Pulmonary tuberculosis			5
Non-pulmonary tuberculosis			2
Cancer			19

Rules for the Recording of Vital Statistics during Wartime

Special rules drawn up by the General Register Office have been summarised in my annual reports for 1939-41.

Two separate series of birth statistics have been maintained since October 1st, 1939. As from 1st January, 1942, the second of these series has been discontinued and the registration of all births is now referred to the area of the mothers usual residence. The figures thus obtained are to be used for the calculation of both birth rates and infant and maternal mortality rates. In view of the greater stability of the population during 1942, it would not appear that either the infant or the maternal mortality rates will be noticiably affected by this reversion to pre-war practice.

Sanitary Circumstances of the Area

I am indebted to the Sanitary Inspector, Mr.F.B.Ashbridge, for the following details:-

Water Supply, Drainage and Sewage

There have been no changes of importance in these services.

Public Cleansing and Salvage

An efficient fortnightly service has been maintained.

The quantities of all types of salvage collected continues to compare very favourably with other districts of similar population.

Closet Accommodation

Total numbers in the district on 31st December, 1942 -

(a)	Privies	nil
(b)	Pail closets ..	24
(c)	Water closets ..	2782

There were no conversions during the year.

Sanitary Inspection of the Area

Total number of complaints received during the year		145
" " " defects or nuisances discovered		296
" " " inspections		465
" " " " (re-visits)		1413
" " " preliminary notices served	(Housing	39
	(Other notices	263
" " " " " complied with	(Housing	34
	(Other notices	251
" " " notices outstanding on 31st December,1942	(Housing	5
	(Other notices	46
" " " statutory notices served		2
" " " " " complied with		2

No summary action has been taken during the year

Eradication of Bed Bugs

Total number of dwelling houses found infested	(Council houses	4
	(Other houses	14
" " " " " disinfested		18

Inspection of Dwelling Houses

1. (a)	Total no. of dwelling houses inspected for housing defects (under Public Health or Housing Acts)	310
(b)	No. of inspections made for the purpose	752
2.	No. of dwelling houses (included under sub head (1) above) which were inspected and recorded under the Housing Consolidation Regulations 1925 and 1932	nil
3.	No. of dwelling houses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation	nil
4.	No. of dwelling houses (exclusive of those referred to under the preceding sub head) found to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation	nil
5.	No. of defective dwelling houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by the local authority or its officers	39
6.	No. of defective dwelling houses in respect of which action under statutory powers was taken	nil
7.	No. of cases of overcrowding reported during the year	11
8.	No. of cases of overcrowding relieved during the year	8

INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD

Milk

Retailers:- (other than cowkeepers)	No. on register	68
	No. of inspections of premises	29
	No. of contraventions found	2
	No. of contraventions remedied	2
Producers:- (including those who retail milk)	No. on register	19
	No. of inspections	55
	No. of contraventions found	5
	No. of contraventions remedied	5

Milk sampling

Designated milk	Total no. of samples taken for bacteriological examination	10
	No. of samples satisfactory	9
	No. of samples not satisfactory	1
Ordinary milk	Total no. of samples taken for bacteriological examination	137
	94 samples Grade 1, 11 Grade II 32 Grade III and none Grade IV	

Investigations are made when any samples are found below Grade II and repeat samples are taken.

Meat and Other Foods

There are no regional slaughter houses in the area. 38 animals have been slaughtered in the district during the year. 35 of the carcases were inspected.

No. of Inspections

Knackers yards	43
Meat stalls	13
Meat shops and stores	39
Places where food other than meat is kept or prepared for sale	12

PREVALENCE OF AND CONTROL OVER INFECTIOUS DISEASE

Diphtheria

The intensive campaign to promote immunisation against diphtheria has been continued throughout the year. On 31st December, 1942, it was estimated that 50.6% of the children under five years and 90.1% of those in the 5-15 year age group were immunised. The corresponding figures in 1941 had been 45.0% and 80.2% respectively.

There has been a definite decline in incidence of the disease. Amongst children under the age of 15 there were 8 cases and 1 death during 1942 as compared with 23 cases and 2 deaths in 1941. At the time of writing this report it would appear that the decline will be even more dramatic during the year 1943.

Measles and Whooping Cough

An epidemic of measles occurred during the last three months of the year. 147 cases were notified, but the disease was uniformly mild and no deaths occurred.

The whooping cough epidemic of 1941 declined and only 5 cases were notified during 1942.

Scabies

The incidence of scabies continues to be comparatively low in the Wigston district. The majority of cases are in children and are treated at the school clinic. Adult cases are referred to their own doctor.

A number of cases had to be followed up to ensure that treatment of the whole family was efficiently carried out, but in no case was it necessary to resort to compulsion under the Scabies Order, 1941.

Table showing cases of infectious diseases notified during the year

Disease	Under 1 yr.	1-	2-	3-	4-	5-	10-	15-	20-	35-	45-	65-	+ All Ages	Cases adm. to hospital	Deaths
Smallpox	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Enteric Fever	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Diphtheria	–	–	–	–	–	6	2	2	3	–	–	–	15	15	1
Scarlet Fever	–	–	2	2	2	4	5	–	3	–	–	–	21	19	–
Cerebro-spinal Fever	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	2	2	–
Pneumonia	2	–	1	1	1	2	–	–	1	–	3	1	12		10
Anterior Poliomyelitis	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Measles	4	11	13	24	26	62	3	–	4	–	–	–	147	1	–
Whooping Cough	1	–	–	2	–	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	5	1	1

+ Includes cases for which full details of age are not available.
No cases of erysepelas, encephalitis lethargica or puerperal pyrexia were notified.

Table showing particulars of new cases and deaths from tuberculosis

Age Groups	New Cases				Deaths			
	Respiratory		Non-Respiratory		Respiratory		Non-Respiratory	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
0-	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
1-	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
5-	–	1	–	1	–	1	–	–
15-	1	1	–	1	1	–	–	1
25-	2	2	1	–	1	–	–	–
35-	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
45-	1	–	–	1	1	–	–	–
55-	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
65-	–	–	–	–	1	–	1	–
All Ages	6	4	1	3	4	1	1	1

EVACUATION

There was a considerable decline in the number of evacuees during the course of the year. On 17th December, 1942, the billeting officer reported that there were 27 unaccompanied children, 269 other evacuees either receiving billeting allowance or in requisitioned houses, 329 official evacuees not belonging to the above classes and 35 making their own arrangements.

Although a large number of evacuees have returned to their homes, the aftermath of evacuation continues to present Wigston with many intricate and difficult problems and a number of families who may be described as derelict or semi-derelict continue to reside in the district. In dealing with their problems the work of the Welfare Officers, Miss Fletcher (resigned May, 1942) and Miss Keith (appointed September, 1942) has proved of great success.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I desire to acknowledge my thanks to the Public Health Committee and to the Officers and Staff of the Council for the ready co-operation and assistance which they have given me during the year.

I have the honour to be, Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

ALEC E. MARTIN, M.D., D.P.H.,

Medical Officer of Health